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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2842
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3070
RUEAORC/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PRO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIRUT 001299

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SUBJECT: LEBANON: MAKKAWI SAYS GULF STATES NEED TO HELP
WITH NAHR AL-BARID RECONSTRUCTION, NOW

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) In a September 3 meeting with the Ambassador, Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee President Ambassador Khalil Makkawi said Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar had yet to make any pledges for the reconstruction appeal for the destroyed Palestinian Refugee camp Nahr al-Barid and asked for USG support in approaching these Gulf countries. Makkawi added that the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) would be unable to sustain the rebuilding effort in the long term if additional funding was not secured.

2. (C) Makkawi also said that the August 28 visit of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was a success and led to a better sense of understanding between Palestinian Authority and GOL officials. Makkawi noted that he will be travel to Washington D.C. on September 25 and requested meetings with State officials. End Summary.

GULF COUNTRIES, OTHER
DONORS NEED TO PONY UP

3. (C) Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee President Ambassador Khalil Makkawi told the Ambassador and PolOff that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar still had not provided any financial support for the rebuilding of the destroyed Palestinian Refugee camp Nahr al-Barid. He said the UN Works and Relief Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), which is leading the reconstruction effort, is in a dire situation at the moment. UNRWA is unable to do any type of long-term reconstruction planning without first having a secure source of funding, he added. Makkawi noted that the Gulf countries originally

stated that they would pay for half of the \$450 million cost of rebuilding the camp; however, none of the four countries has pledged any money to date.

14. (C) Makkawi also said UNRWA will insist that other donors provide updates on the status of their pledges. At the June 23 Nahr al-Barid Reconstruction Appeal in Vienna, UNRWA received around \$110 million in pledges from the donor community. Of this amount, UNRWA has collected only \$60 to \$70 million. Therefore, there will be a \$115 million shortfall, even if the Gulf countries come up with the \$225 million they promised, Makkawi noted. UNRWA planned to start reconstruction activities without the missing funds; however, Makkawi said this would be extremely difficult in the long run if additional funding is absent.

15. (C) In a September 3 dinner with the Ambassador and UNRWA Commissioner General Karen AbuZayd, outgoing UNRWA Lebanon Director Richard Cook said he was "appalled" by the lack of support from the Gulf. Cook said the Gulf countries are citing "security and political" concerns for the cause of their hesitation (though he noted this has not stopped the thousands of Gulf tourists coming to Lebanon to enjoy the famous night-life and restaurants). However, he noted that Oman and the OPEC Fund for International Development each provided \$5 million donations to UNRWA. Also, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development has pledged \$15 million. However, Cook said there was little to no engagement from the remaining Gulf countries. His request to see the Saudi Ambassador in Beirut was ignored, while the UAE Ambassador told Cook he would pass along Cook's message to UAE

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officials. Cook added that in his most recent meeting with PM Siniora, Siniora seemed dejected and unhopeful that Gulf support would develop. Cook said Siniora's attitude surprised him because in previous meetings with the PM, Siniora seemed adamant that Arab support would eventually arrive and said he would lobby the Gulf countries hard for their promised pledges.

MAHMOUD ABBAS
VISIT - EXCELLENT

16. (C) Makkawi described the August 28 visit by Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas as "excellent on the refugee issue." According to Makkawi, Abbas said, "We Palestinians are guests in Lebanon and are under the authority of the GOL. We Palestinians will comply with any decision the GOL makes regarding weapons, inside or outside the camps." Abbas addressed many Lebanese fears by dispelling the idea of permanent resettlement for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, he said, adding that these two statements reassured many GOL officials and created a new era of trust between Palestinian officials and the GOL.

17. (C) Makkawi gauged the success of the visit and Abbas's statements by noting that the opposition made no statements against the Abbas trip, nor against what Abbas said. Makkawi said Abbas is quite aware of the fact that the Gulf countries provided no money for Nahr al-Barid reconstruction. Abbas proposed that a joint delegation of PA and GOL officials go to Riyadh, Kuwait City, Abu Dhabi, and Doha to make their cases in the Gulf leaders. Makkawi added that the PA representative in Lebanon, Ambassador Abbas Zaki, was an excellent choice and that Zaki has done a great job.

HOW THE USG CAN HELP

18. (C) Makkawi asked the USG to approach the Saudi government to seek financial support for Nahr al-Barid reconstruction efforts. He noted that if Saudi Arabia made a pledge, Kuwait and UAE would be sure to follow. Makkawi added that he spoke with President Michel Sleiman before

Sleiman's recent trip to Qatar and asked Sleiman to bring this issue up with the Qataris.

¶9. (C) The Ambassador told Makkawi that the USG will provide an additional \$13.5 million, in addition to the \$10 million USG pledge made in Vienna, for Nahr al-Barid reconstruction (the USG pledge in Vienna also included community policing and surrounding Lebanese community assistance for a total package of \$23 million). The Ambassador added that the USG will announce an additional \$4.31 million pledge at the September 11 Appeal hosted by UNRWA and the GOL for immediate relief and recovery activities for displaced Nahr al-Barid refugees and inhabitants of the Beddawi refugee camp, which is where most of the displaced Nahr al-Barid refugees are staying. (Note: UNRWA is asking for \$42.7 million for this appeal, which will go towards food distribution, emergency health needs, rental subsidies for families living in temporary housing, as well as staffing and operational costs for running the two northern most camps in Lebanon. End Note.) Makkawi was well pleased with this news.

VISIT TO THE U.S.

¶10. (C) Makkawi noted that he will travel to Washington, D.C. in late September. Makkawi is the President of the Worldwide Alumni Association of American University in Beirut (WAAAUB) Board of Directors. The organization's North American

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chapters will hold a meeting on September 27 and 28 in Washington D.C. Makkawi expressed interest in meeting with State Department officials working on Palestinian refugee issues. Makkawi will arrive the evening of Thursday, September 25 and will be available for meetings the morning of Friday, September 26.

SISON